



COMMONWEALTH of VIRGINIA

Department of Health

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STATE HEALTH COMMISSIONER

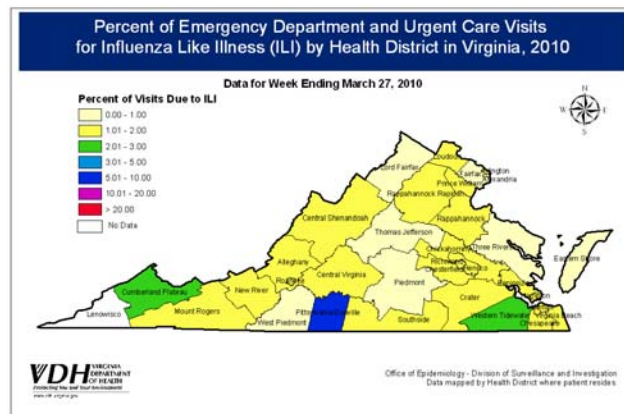
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April 2, 2010

Dear Colleague:

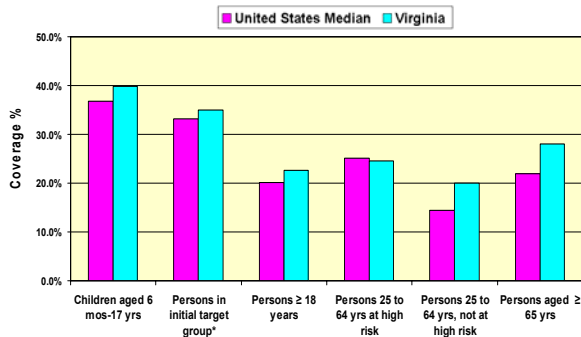
Earlier this week the CDC released information describing an uptick in influenza activity and then yesterday released preliminary H1N1 vaccination rates for the country. Please take the time to read below about our shared successes, areas in which we still can improve and the ongoing need for surveillance and vaccination.

Here in Virginia, our most recent assessment has moved our flu activity level up from sporadic to local. An H1N1-associated death was reported in mid-March. Nationally, areas in the southeastern United States are continuing to report regional or local flu activity, with Georgia seeing an increase in hospitalizations since mid-February. Seasonal flu activity has not been detected – this uptick is all the result of H1N1. To date, there is no evidence that the virus has changed.



While many states stopped vaccination campaigns this winter, I am very proud that Virginia’s clinicians have continued to vaccinate at every opportunity. Yesterday the CDC announced that Virginia’s partnership between private sector vaccinators (over 3000!) and public health has given us an overall H1N1 vaccination rate of over 26% and a >6 months to 18 year old rate of nearly 40%, placing us above both the national and mid-Atlantic regional median. These numbers were obtained through phone surveys using standard CDC methodology.

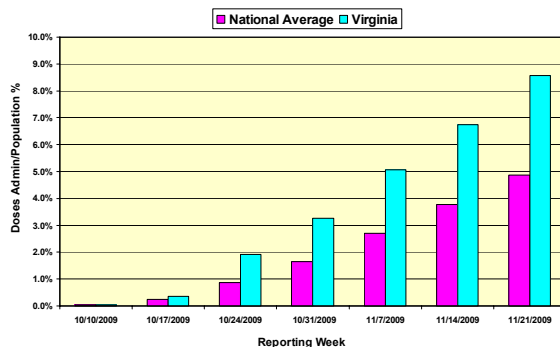
**H1N1 Vaccination Coverage by High Risk and Age Group
 CDC Data**



Notes: The series "U.S. median" represents the middle value in the ordered set of all United States' coverage values. Data based on surveys by the Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System (BRFSS) and National 2009 H1N1 Flu Survey (NHFS). Research conducted November 2009 through February 2010; coverage percent is through January 31, 2010.
 * Persons in the initial target group included persons aged 6 months to 24 years, pregnant women, healthcare and EMS personnel and persons aged 25 to 64 years with medical conditions that placed them at higher risk for flu complications.

Of particular interest are our significantly higher vaccination rates when compared to the national average in the first seven weeks of the campaign. During this difficult time of supply/demand mismatch, the entire clinical community worked heroically to maximize immunization opportunities, particularly for those in the high risk categories.

**H1N1 Doses Administered Based on Population
 First Seven Weeks of Vaccination Campaign**



Notes: The national and state population percentages were calculated using the cumulative doses administered total for the nation or the state divided by the population for the area. Doses administered data were reported to CDC's Countermeasure and Response Administration (CRA) by Virginia, 49 other states, D.C. and seven territories.

Lastly, the national healthcare worker vaccination rate is 34.7%. I know we can do a better job of protecting our coworkers and ourselves so encourage you to continue to lead the way in getting your staff and colleagues vaccinated. The complete reports can be found at http://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/mmwr_wk/wk_cvol.html.

Though this level of protection has certainly decreased our susceptibility to what may be a developing third wave, many of our children and other vulnerable populations remain at risk. I ask you to continue to vaccinate at every opportunity. Those children who have reached 6 months of age, children without a second dose and newly pregnant women continue to need our focus for vaccination efforts. The majority of deaths continue to be in adults with chronic diseases so I encourage you to continue to promote vaccination in this population. Your local health department continues to provide free H1N1 flu vaccinations to all.

Please continue to use the Virginia Immunization Information System (VIIS) to record H1N1 vaccine doses administered. If you have not yet tapped into this free web-based system that

consolidates vaccination records from multiple providers into one record, contact the VDH Division of Immunization for more information at 804 864-8055.

As part of VDH's commitment to ongoing partnership and communication, I am asking you to assist us by completing the attached brief questionnaire found at <http://www.zoomerang.com/Survey/WEB22AFRNVF2NV> Your input is critical as we assess our response to the H1N1 influenza pandemic and plan for future public health challenges.

It is a pleasure and source of great personal pride to work with you during this daunting time. I am hopeful that you find VDH to be of service to you and your patients and look forward to building upon our strengthened partnership. Thank you again and best professional regards.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Karen Remley".

Karen Remley, MD, MBA, FAAP